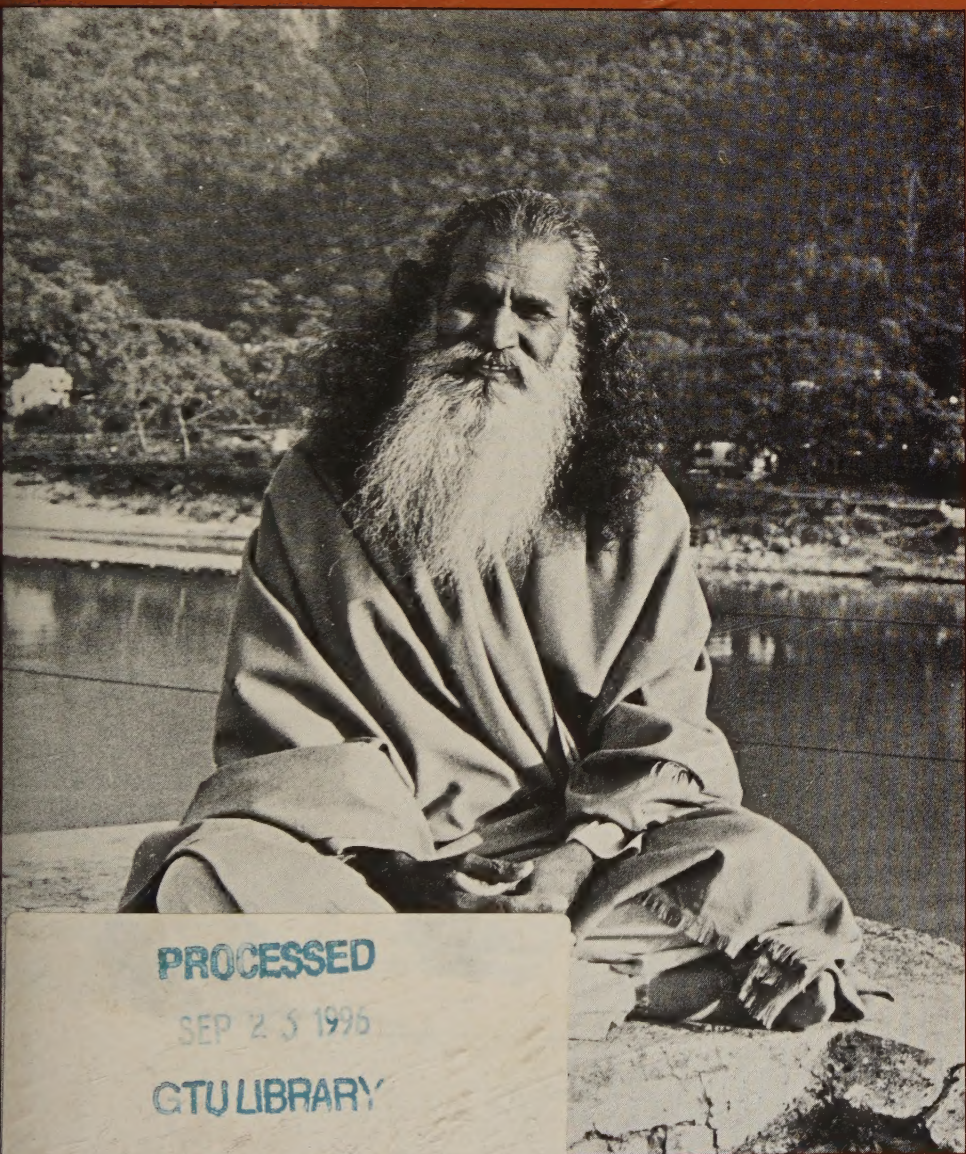


YIntegral[®]Yoga

THE TEACHINGS OF
SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

Autumn 1996
\$4.50



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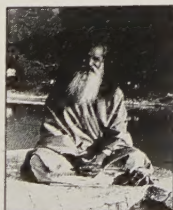
YIntegral Yoga®

FEATURES

- 7 **We create our past,
present and future**
by Swami Satchidananda
- 9 **What is death?**
by Sadu Vaswani
- 11 **The interval between
death and rebirth**
by Sri Swami Sivananda
- 13 **A call to rebirth**
by Swami Chidananda
- 15 **Reincarnation: A view
from the West**
by Rev. Kumari de Sachy

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 **Letters to Sri Gurudev**
- 5 **Satsang with Sri Gurudev**
- 19 **Poetry**
- 24 **Yoga and Health**
- 27 **Vidyalayam Corner**
- 28 **Integral Yoga Highlights**
- 31 **Poetry**



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INTEGRAL YOGA® AND YOU

INTEGRAL YOGA® Magazine is the official organ of the Integral Yoga Institutes, Teaching Centers and Satchidananda Ashrams. In these centers the Integral Yoga teachings of Sri Swami Satchidananda are lived and shared. The centers offer ongoing programs in the various branches of Yoga—including Hatha, Raja, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Yoga - as well as instruction in yogic diet and other related topics. There are open classes, courses, teacher training programs, universal worship services and retreats for both beginners and more advanced students. Resident programs, providing an opportunity to experience total yogic living, are also available.

A wide range of guest programs are offered at the Ashram in Buckingham, Virginia. Located at the Virginia Ashram are: the Audio-Video and Publishing departments, Integral Yoga Distribution, the Fine Arts Society, the elementary school, an affiliated Credit Union, and the international coordination offices for all Integral Yoga centers.

The LOTUS (Light Of Truth Universal Shrine), a shrine dedicated to the Light of all faiths and to world peace, is open to the public and is located in Yogaville, Virginia.

For more information, to arrange an Integral Yoga program for any group, or to be put on our mailing list, please feel free to contact any of the centers listed inside the back cover of this Magazine. We are here to serve you.

Letters To

I wanted to thank you for being you helping me throughout the year in a mysterious way that you have. You've influenced my life profoundly and empowered me to influence others with the practice of your Yoga class.

I continue to teach two Yoga classes a week, and I am forever grateful for that opportunity. I took Teacher Training in the winter of 1993 and know that I have only scratched the surface of Yoga. But I'm so lucky that I'm able to let the teachings in. I'm blessed with the awareness of the possibilities of "a life free from all disturbances."

So, Gurudev, thank you for coming into my life and somehow hearing my cries of despair and for guiding me back to the path of spirituality and truth. Love and Light. Peace and Joy.

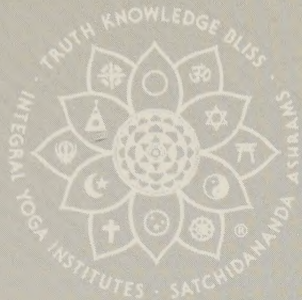
Beaufort

Sri Gurudev

A short while after I was born, my parents brought me to you, and you held me in your arms and gave me the name of Siva. A few years ago, I came to Yogaville with my father. Neither of us had ever been here and we could stay only a few hours, but those hours left a great impact on me. I tell my friends about this place and tell them to come to spend some time here.

I am currently attending a university in New York State. About a month ago, I fell in love with someone at school. Last night, we were driving into town to pick up some groceries and started talking about how great it would be to drop everything and to drive south. Before I knew it, we were on the road from New York to Yogaville, Virginia. We had the most wonderful time driving through the night, and I wanted to thank you for the destination that made the trips with my father and girlfriend experiences that we will remember for the rest of our lives. You and Yogaville have brought me closer to both of them, making my relationships with them more fulfilling. Best wishes and thanks again.

—NSHS
New York



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SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

(called "Sri Gurudev" by his students) is a master of Yoga, a world spiritual teacher, and Guru of the students of Integral Yoga. Dedicated to the ecumenical movement, his motto is: "Truth is One, Paths are Many." His main residence is in Buckingham, Virginia. In response to invitations from all around the globe, Sri Gurudev travels widely. Through every possible medium—lectures, conferences, radio, television and newspaper interviews, books and visits to centers around the world—he shares his knowledge in the fields of education, religion, health and Yoga.



Satsang with Sri Gurudev

Question: Beloved Gurudev, I want to know why people die. (*This question was asked by a five-year-old child*).

Sri Gurudev: People don't die, sweetie. The body dies. But the body is not the people. People live in the body. They use the body to live in like the way they use a car to move around. After sometime, the car breaks down because of the long time usage or from an accident, and then you discard the car, send it to the junkyard and get a new model. In the same way, when people

...when people lose their body, which you call dying, they get a new body.

lose their body, which you call dying, they get a new body. This may be for various reasons: they abuse the body or they do too much work. Like any machine, if you overwork the machine, it will experience wear and tear fast.

For example, look at the modern day games and activities. How much the people involved abuse the body; their bodies get worn out soon. So, you must exercise the body reasonably without overworking it. And, you must put in the right kind of fuel. That means food. Then, the body will last long. But still there is a time limit. Like American cars, which are made to last two years only. German cars, on the other hand, are made to last for ten years. So, our "cars" are made to last for a hundred years. Yes, if you take good care of your body, you can live in it for one hundred years. But if you don't take good care of it, it may begin to disintegrate sooner.

Dying means just losing the body. You will get a new body. Is it not nice to get a new

car? You don't want to use an old car always. So, like that, it's nice to die so that you can get a new car. In fact, if people knew what the benefit of dying was, they wouldn't hesitate to die. That doesn't mean that they have to kill themselves earlier. No. But, when the time comes, they should feel, "Okay." It's like fruit. Until the fruit is ripe, it sticks to the tree. Then, when it's all ripe, it drops out. In the same way, when the spirit, when the person inside has gained all

the knowledge that is to be gained by this body in this life, then he or she

doesn't need the body any more. The body drops away, and the person goes further to take another body if necessary. If we really understand what death means, we won't be unhappy to die. In fact, when death comes, we will welcome it.

After death we will have more freedom. Before death we are confined to this body. The body is like a prison. If you want to reach out, you can reach only so far with the body. Without the body, you can reach very far. That's why you do very far away things in your dream, because you are using a different body in the dream, not this physical body. You can go wherever you want to go. You want to go to Hawaii overnight, within a second, you are in Hawaii, or London. Wherever you want. You enjoy everything, and then you come back. You do it in the dream. How are we enjoying all those things? We are enjoying them with a different kind of body—the subtle body, not the physical body. In a way, the physical body confines us. It's a prison. Thiruvalluvar says,

"Like a bird still inside the egg. When the time comes, the bird breaks the egg and flies away." But what I say is that we don't have to be in a hurry to drop the body. The body is given to us to experience certain kinds of life experiences. And as long as the body is there, we experience these things. When we experience everything that is to be experienced by this body, then we don't need the body, or the body itself decomposes. Until then, naturally let it take its time, but don't be afraid of death. It's a joyous thing to die. It's almost like somebody saying, "See you later." You can literally say that: "Okay, I'll see you later. Goodbye." So, don't worry about dying.

Question: Our family dog died recently. Might he evolve from taking the form of a canine to that of a chimp or human or whatever suits his experience now?

Sri Gurudev: Yes, he can take whatever form he wants. Whatever that soul wants to

The body is given to us to experience certain kinds of life experiences.

experience, a proper body will be given. For, remember, the dog was not just a dog; it was a soul in a dog's body, just like the soul in a human body. There's no difference at all between your body and the dog's body except that the dog walks on all fours and

has a tail. Your body has receded, and you have started walking upright with two feet—that's all. The difference is only in the vehicle. Even inside

the dog, there can be a great soul. Maybe because of some past strong desire, the soul could have become a dog; and, then, the soul purges out that desire through the dog's body. The desire that is waiting to be experienced calls for an appropriate body. It could be a human body. For example, now I am in this human body, but when I am irritated, if I constantly bark at people, satisfy that desire to bark, do you know what kind of body I will get next? A bull mastiff or something like that. So, it's your desire that calls for a body. It can be a chimpanzee, a saint; it can be anything. ■

And when his body falleth off altogether, as an old fish-shell, his soul doeth well by releasing, and formeth a new one instead. . . The person of man is only a mask which the soul putteth on for a season; it weareth its proper time and then is cast off, and another is worn in its stead. . . I telleth you, of a truth, that the spirits which now have affinity shall be kindred together, although they all meet in new persons and names. —The New Koran

We create our past, present and future

by Sri Swami Satchidananda

The nature of time

Recently, someone asked me if one could be reborn at a prior time, for example, in the 1500s if that environment were best for his evolution. This question calls for an explanation of what time means.

What is time? Present, past, future. Is there really something like that? Is the past dead and gone? The future still not there? No. Your babyhood is past, but you are still here. Your old age is in the future, but you are still here. Past is not something dead and gone. Past is what you don't see any more. Because your vision is just so wide.

To make an analogy, if your camera has a telephoto lens and if I look through the telephoto lens, I may probably see only the face of Swami Hamsananda. That's my present. But if I remove the telephoto lens and replace it with a wide-angle lens, a fish-eye lens, then what would I see? I would see everybody here. Therefore, when I was seeing only Hamsananda, were the other people not here? Yes; they were already here. I just simply didn't see them, that's all. So, at present I am seeing only her just because I am seeing only this much.

To give another example. You're standing on the banks of the James River and you see a log floating. A couple of miles ahead, a friend also stands on the river bank, and below you, a third friend stands. Three people are standing on the shore, perhaps two miles apart: A, B, and C. You are B, she is A, and

he is C. A log is floating down the river. All three of you have walkie-talkies. A says, "Hey, I see a log floating down the river." What do you say? You say, "I don't see anything." C also says, "I never saw anything." However, for A the log is present. Then, maybe ten or fifteen minutes later, you, B, say, "Hey, I see the log here." And you ask A, "Do you still see it?" A responds, "No. I saw it." A says, "I saw the log." Right?

And C will say, "I will see the log soon." So, to A the log is a past thing. To B the log is a present thing. And to C the log is a future thing. But the water is there, and the log is still there. Thus, one and the same thing becomes a past thing to one person, a present thing to another person, and a future thing to the third person. And that's the nature of our past, present and future.

Time and space are eternal

It all depends upon how much you see. For instance, if B, who is standing right in the middle, could broaden his vision, then he would see the log come in front of A, go through him, and then go to C, also, meaning that A's past and C's future is B's present. Am I clear? Do you see this picture. In other words, the past, the present, and the future are just limited to our angle of vision. And that's how we function in the world. We see things only in a limited way.

To explain it further, right now we are aware of things happening in the twentieth century. The fifteenth century we have for-

gotten, or we don't see it, but that doesn't mean that it's all gone. There is an eternal present if only we could have global vision. For example, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna saw only the battlefield. However, when he was given super vision, he was, in his present state, able to see everything that was to happen. And it's not only with time, but it's the same thing with space, also.

You see only the room you're in now, so this is the present for you. But, at the same time, there are things happening all around you. And if you walk outside, then that becomes the present. So, time and space are eternal. There is no past, no present, no future. But we create our past, present, future; thus, there's no going back or going ahead.

Coming directly to the original question, you are reborn into a life to experience something that you have been desiring to experience. Therefore, if your desire was to experience the world of the fifteenth century, then, certainly, even right here, you would experience fifteenth century life. Don't we, even now, find people who are not of the twentieth century? How often we remark, "Hey, you are not fit to be in the twentieth century!" "You are still a barbarian," we say. Yes; to that person, it is not the twentieth century. So, it depends on the experience. The world, itself, is eternal. It has all the experiences all the time, always. You simply place yourself in a particular situation—heaven or hell! It's not that heaven and hell exist somewhere else. They can exist right here. You can create your own heaven or hell. It's all up to your thinking.

Centuries mean nothing. You can experience everything at all times. You don't have to leave one place and go somewhere else. Wherever you go, you carry your own imagination. If there is a hell in your heart, even if you go to heaven, you won't see

heaven there. But if you have heaven in your heart, then even in hell you will enjoy yourself: "Ah, what a wonderful place." Yes. It's true. It's all up to you.

Thy will be done

We sometimes don't accept things, we don't accept that, in the overall picture, whatever has to happen is happening. You may blame people. You may blame Nixon, Reagan, Roosevelt, Gandhi, Hitler, Rasputin. You may blame and praise people. But the one superconsciousness that is the cause for the entire creation is taking care of everything and doing everything at the proper time. We label that as good or bad, right or wrong, but what has to happen will happen or has happened. Temporarily, we can point our finger and say, "He is the cause; she is the cause." And we do all that until we get tired of it. And then, one day, we'll say, "Well, nobody seems to be the cause. It all happens according to His will."

Yes, we go to the altar and say, "God, it's all Thy Will. Thy Will be done." Then, the minute we come out: "You, how can you do this to me?" In the church, in the temple, it

But the one superconsciousness that is the cause for the entire creation is taking care of everything and doing everything at the proper time.

is easy to pray, "Oh, without you even an atom cannot move." But the minute we come out, we think, "How dare you do that to me? Total contradiction. It's a merry-go-round, though we're on a ferriswheel—up and down around and around. And then, when we get tired of constantly blaming others, we say, "I don't know what things seem to be happen-

ing whether I want it or not." Then, you begin to accept things. Otherwise, until then, you think that you are cleverer than God, that God must be a fool: "Look at Him; He created the world, and He is just quietly, comfortably sleeping somewhere, leaving the whole thing in such a turmoil. True. And we, is it our bound duty to save the whole world? No. Save yourself first before you save the world. ■

What is death?

by Sadhu Vaswani

Question: I have lost a dear one; my sorrow has no end. I think of the dear, departed one, and I shed tears. How may I bear the bereavement? And what should be my attitude to the dead?

Sadhu Vaswani: The dead are not dead. It is natural to have grief in our hearts when our dear ones depart. To be natural is to be spiritual. Suppression is not spirituality. Sorrow is something natural. The question is: does sorrow take the form of *moha*, or love? *Moha* is attachment to a "form," and attachment is not love. In attachment, we think of our own pleasure or satisfaction; but in love we think of the happiness of our dear ones. *Moha* is selfish; love is non-egoistic, and love is trained in detachment. The dear, departed ones enter higher realms and are under the protection of an invisible Brotherhood of Angels. It is the form that passes away, but the soul does not die. I know of persons who feel hopelessly miserable at the departure of their dear ones. Such misery is a denial of God. It is real atheism. It is attachment to forms. The right attitude is to send out love and prayer. To love another is to make him [or her] beautiful. Love beautifies the object of love. prayer, also, gives beauty. Therefore, as you think of your dear, departed one, send out love and prayer and so help him to grow more and more, in a new life of beauty and blessedness.

Question: What is your conception of death? Does death end all?

**Death is only
of the body,
not the *Atman*,
the real Being.**

Sadhu Vaswani: Death is only of the body, not the *Atman*, the real Being. The body—or, rather, a body—dies; the *sthula sarira*, the gross body, dies; but the *Atman*—the *Atmic* energy—persists. Cut the tree; it drops down dead, but the bird sitting on that tree flies to another. The *Atman* is like the bird. The body drops down dead; the *Atmic* energy appears in another *kosha* (form), in another sphere. What we call death is dissociation, not extinction. The *Atmic* energy is released with the passing of a particular *sthula sarira*. In a profound sense, death is release. This physical body, if a vehicle of consciousness, is also a limitation of *Atmic* energy.

Question: What about a person who does not see his [or her] way to believe in rebirth?

Sadhu Vaswani: The idea of rebirth may be viewed as a "dogma" or an "outlook." A dogma is a barrier. As an outlook, it may be found helpful in shaping our life in the light of the great truth of development and its different stages. With this outlook on life, a person will exercise more charity in his or her dealings with others. People are in different stages of evolution; this is one aspect of the idea of rebirth; this aspect has practical value, for it teaches us to be more patient with others. Yet we must not over-emphasize the idea of rebirth. A person may reject it, and yet live a noble life. Many there are to whom the idea fails of its appeal, but their lives are beautiful. The emphasis in my outlook is not on dogma but on "doing." Go and "do" the Will of God in daily life! That is all that matters. ■



The interval between death and rebirth

by Sri Swami Sivananda

People wish to know the exact period that elapses from the time of leaving the body and being born again. Does the soul take a new body in one year? Does it take ten years? How long does one live upon the subtler planes before reappearing on the earth plane? These are some of the questions.

Now, there is no definite period of time in this matter. In the main, two factors decide this issue, viz., the nature of the individual *karma* and the last impression before death. It may vary from hundreds of years to even a few months. Those who work out some of their *karmanas* on other planes in subtler regions take a considerable time before entering a fresh body. The interval is very long, for a year of the earth-period passes off as a single day on the celestial plane. There is an instance cited where, seeing the amazement and admiration of foreign tourists at the imposing ruins of certain ancient monuments, a saint present in the vicinity remarked that some of these very people had fashioned these monuments centuries ago. Now they looked in amazement upon their own handiwork.

A very sensual individual with strong craving or one with intense attachment sometimes is reborn quickly. Also, in cases where life is cut short by a violent death or a sudden, unexpected accident, the *Jiva* [soul] resumes the thread very soon. This was so in the case of the Amritsar girl, Mahindra Kumari. She was reborn within seven months of her death

in October 1939. So strong was her desire to see her brother at the time of death.

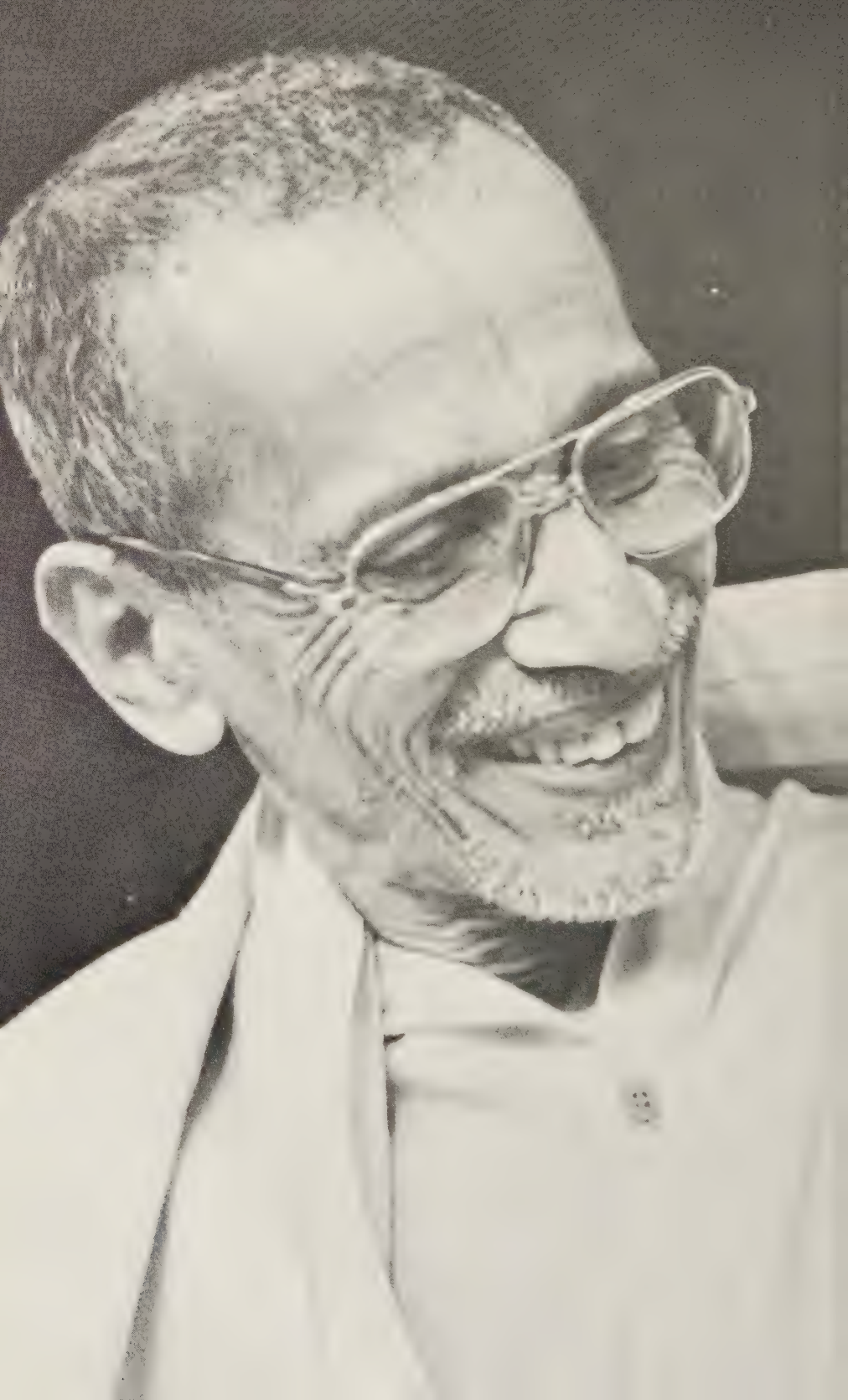
Usually, in such cases of immediate rebirth, the *Jiva* often remembers many of the events of its previous life. It recognizes its former relatives and friends and identifies old homes and familiar objects. This sometimes leads to very queer developments. For example, there are some instances where a murdered person, being reborn, has declared the manner of his death

and revealed the identity of the killer from the recent past. Or a reincarnated individual has, at times, unerringly uncovered the treasure that had been hidden away by him or her. In the vast majority, this memory is not present. This is really a blessing conferred by the

all-wise Being. For such recollection would greatly complicate our present lives. The past is veiled to you until such time as it is good and helpful to remember it. When you attain perfection and reach the end of a cycle, all will be revealed, and you will see a whole rosary of lives threaded upon the one personality. But such cases of immediate rebirth are not common.

Generally, for an average individual, the interval between death and rebirth happens to be a considerable period, measured in terms of earth-time. Persons who have done much good *karma* spend a great deal of time on the *Daivic* plane before being born again. Great souls, spiritually advanced persons, wait for a long time before reincarnating. ■

**When you attain
perfection and
reach the end of
a cycle, all will
be revealed...**



A call to rebirth

by Sri Swami Chidananda

Purification

A human life, a human birth, is a call to rebirth. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of god." So said the great teacher of the Middle East, Jesus Christ, to Nicodemus, the respected ruler and spiritual aspirant, when he came one night to question Jesus secretly. "How can a man be born when he is old?" the confused Nicodemus asked. "Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Water is a universal cleansing and purifying agent. So it means getting rid of *mala* (impurity) and having *chitta suddhi* (purity of mind). You have to emerge as a purified being. That is also the symbolism behind baptism: a cleansing of and getting rid of all sin and emerging sinless, spotless, pure.

Fire is also a universal purifying agent. When Sita returned from Lanka, she proved her purity by stepping into a roaring fire and emerging unscathed. Not a hair of her head or even her garments were singed by the blaze as her spotless purity was proven.

Our fire ceremony also symbolizes a thorough burning away of all dross, of all that is impure, of all that is contrary to Divinity, and an emergence as pure Spirit. This is why it is a symbol of the same rebirth that Jesus referred to two thousand years ago. It is a rebirth from passion to purity and, then, from gross earth consciousness,

physical consciousness, material consciousness into a state of spiritual consciousness—a rebirth through the water and the Spirit to emerge as a new being, aware of oneself as connected with the supreme Universal Soul, supreme Cosmic Being, a spiritual being beyond time and space, without birth and death, name and form, blemish or impurity, ever pure, ever free, ever full, ever divine—to enter that knowledge, that consciousness, that awareness.

Daily rebirth

Thus, it is a rebirth of your very identity, a renewal of your identity, a casting away, a dying to the old self and being born into a

new identity where you know of yourself only as related to the Eternal Being, not to this non-eternal world—to the spiritual Reality, not to this gross material

phenomenon, this passing phenomenon.

For a spiritual aspirant, there should be a daily rebirth, a daily re-emerging into a new awareness, a new higher state of purity, a leaving behind of all that is dross, gross, unspiritual, undivine, not a part of authentic, genuine, one hundred per cent spiritual life and emerging into a new state of shining purity, shining spirituality, total divinity.

Again and again, there should be a rebirth until you become like the Being you wish to attain. You become like Brahman, like the pure divine Cosmic Being, as you were when you abided in Him eternally, being in that status of oneness of God, merging yourself into that Self, partaking of His total purity, partaking of His glorious divine nature.

For a spiritual aspirant, there should be a daily rebirth, a daily re-emerging into a new awareness...

Hence, each daybreak should constitute a call to rebirth for a discriminating and discerning soul. But what about nightfall? If pondered in depth, it is an even greater call to rebirth, because even as dawn and daybreak may be an emergence from darkness into light, from inactivity into creative, progressive, fruitful activity, even so, when night falls, it is a turning away from the many, the mere appearance, the carnival, and it is a re-entry into the One, which is the substratum, which is deep within. When night falls, the world disappears. You turn away from your involvement and entanglement in this false appearance, and you go into the silence of the One Without a Second.

Deep sleep

It is, indeed, a refreshing rebirth into the Spirit, plunging once again into *satchidananda*. It is a turning away from the many toward the One. It is a turning away from the harsh, garish tumult and the demands of the senses and the mind into a silence where there is no longer the din of the demanding senses upon your psyche, much less upon yourself. You return back into your original state to emerge refreshed.

If physical death is a dying, entering into deep sleep is a temporary dying, for it is everything that death is each night except that biologically there may be respiration, circulation, etc. Medically, you may not be called dead, but psychically, you have, at that time, entered into a temporary death. The only difference is that at the ultimate death, when you wake up, you wake up into another dimension, another plane of consciousness and being, whereas here in this recurring daily death in deep sleep, we emerge back into the original set-up. That is the only difference. Otherwise, for all practical purposes, the world does not exist for you, and, in effect, you do not exist for the world. In the presence of a wakeful

If physical death is a dying, entering into deep sleep is a temporary dying...

person, no one will dare to commit a theft but in the presence of a person in deep sleep, a thief will steal with impunity because the person is as good as not being there. His existence is null and void.

Therefore, when you wake up from this temporary death called deep sleep, you are

renewed being, and you wake up into a new reality. If you stand by the bank of the Ganges, each moment you are seeing a new river. You may think that you are seeing the same river, but the water that you saw a minute ago

is now downstream. You are now seeing a totally different river. Even so, every morning, you are seeing a different universe, you are in a changed world.

Total Divinity

Waking up should constitute a rebirth into divine life, which means a rebirth into total truthfulness. This is the unvarying, invariable condition for the realization of Reality—to be true to oneself, true with the world, to be honest with oneself and honest with the world. It is a call to divine life in all its unalloyed purity. It is a call to each one of you to truthfulness, to absolute purity in conduct and character, to a continuous, allmost godly compassion, and a reluctance to hurt or harm anything created by God.

Therefore, may we be reborn not once, not twice, but again and again, until there is no longer any necessity or need for another such rebirth or re-emergence. Then, we are in a state of total Divinity. That is what Gurudev [Swami Sivananda] wants each and every one of his followers and devotees to be: total Divinities.

Keep this in your heart and may you become so. You are so! May you know that. You are so, and may you become so, and be so. May you shine with Divinity. May you shine as beings newly endowed with a blazing spiritual consciousness, a radiant spiritual consciousness. God bless you! ■

Reincarnation: A view from the West

by Rev. Kumari de Sachy

From time immemorial and across the world's continents and cultures, human beings have expressed the belief not only in the immortality of the soul but also in reincarnation, that is, the rebirth of the soul into another body.

The dictionary informs us that the word "incarnation" derives from the Latin *incarnari*, which means "to be made flesh." In English the word has come to mean "the endowment of a human body" or "the appearance in human form." Digging a little further into the etymology of the term, the root *incarn* means "to heal" (as when you have a wound and the flesh grows over it). In this regard, it is interesting to note that Hermes, the Greek God of Healing—and a great teacher—had as his symbol the caduceus, which to this day remains the symbol of the medical profession. As you probably remember, the caduceus is a winged staff twined by two serpents, the serpent being an ancient cross-cultural symbol of wisdom and reincarnation.

The term "reincarnation" has several meanings: the rebirth of the soul into another body; a new incarnation; and also the doctrine that the soul reappears after death in another and different bodily form. Other terms related to reincarnation are transmigration and metempsychosis: the passing of the soul after death into some other body, either human or animal.

The doctrine of reincarnation is reflected in the scriptures, the literature, and the mythology of diverse cultures.

The doctrine of reincarnation is reflected in the scriptures, the literature, and the mythology of diverse cultures. Curiously enough, however, in the West, this doctrine has somehow become obscured, invisible to the eye of all but the most clear-sighted and persistent seeker of the Truth. In fact, for centuries in the West, adherence to and expression of the belief in reincarnation meant, at best, ostracism and, at worst, excommunication—or even death.

Contemplating my own intuitional predilection toward this point of view, I wondered why the subject of reincarnation has for centuries been pushed under the rug, so to speak, by Western thinkers, including theologians, philosophers, and scientists. I decided to undertake my own investigation.

My research officially began at the University of Virginia library, where I discovered a little gem of a book about reincarnation and the nature of the soul. Entitled *Autobiography of a Soul* and written in the late 1960s by Karam Narain Kapur, the book includes a Forward by Sri S. R. Das, a former Chief Justice of India and Vice-chancellor of Visva Bharati University. In this Forward, Sri Das remarks that he is highly impressed with the method of presentation adopted in the treatise, "which," he says, "undoubtedly brings out and formulates in a remarkably lucid manner the age-old thoughts of a particular school of

Indian philosophy {Vedanta} with which most of us are by training and upbringing, made familiar from our childhood."

By training and upbringing. This phrase caught my attention. For it told me that not only do Hindus grow up with the belief in reincarnation, but, as part of their education, they also study this doctrine as it is taught in the *Vedas*, the time-honored scriptures of Vedanta philosophy.

By contrast, how many Western children, aside from those whose parents have an interest in Eastern thought, are familiar with the concept of reincarnation; or, if they have heard about it, take it seriously? And for that matter, how many Western adults feel comfortable with the idea that they might die and be reborn again and again and again. These questions, of course, are rhetorical; but it is true that people from Western cultures often dismiss the doctrine of reincarnation variously as illogical, irrational, delusional fantasy, wishful thinking, farfetched, enigmatic and esoteric. Generally speaking, to the Western mind, reincarnation is rooted in the strange and exotic teachings of the mysterious East. It is a doctrine at once foreign and forbidding.

Addressing—and seeking to correct—this limited point of view in her *Forward to Reincarnation: The Phoenix Fire Mystery*, the well-known expert on death and dying, Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, writes:

Many misconceptions have been spread throughout the last centuries so that reincarnation has often been associated only with Eastern cultures. It is rejected partially because of the false idea that reincarnation has something

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to do with being reborn in different animal forms or in different forms of life from the one that we now have in a human body. This is a natural misconception, and those who are born again in another life will not only be born again as human beings, but will always be born again as male or female.

Dr. Kubler-Ross later corrected this statement. Writing to the author in 1984, she stated: "I was wrong. We are born as male or female each time we incarnate.

With respect to reincarnation having "something to do with being reborn in different animal forms. . .," it is true that many Western thinkers, past and present

share Dr. Kubler-Ross's belief that human souls will always incarnate as human beings and never as animals or subhumans. However, there are exceptions. Church Father Justin Martyr (A.D. 100? - C. 165), for instance, held that souls who have become un-

worthy to see God are joined to the bodies of wild beasts. And, closer to our own time, 19th century American Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, wrote in his journal on 26 June 1951: "Visited a menagerie this afternoon. . . . What constitutes the difference between a wild beast and a tame one? How much more human the one than the other! Growling, scratching, roaring, with whatever beauty and gracefulness, still untamable, this royal Bengal tiger or this leopard. They have the character and the importance of another order of men. The majestic lions, the king of beasts—he must retain his title. . . . It is unavoidable, the idea of transmigration; not merely a fancy of the poets, but an instinct of race."

Traditionally, Eastern philosophies and

religions tend to be inclusive and non-materialistic, while those of the West are inclined to be inclusive and materialistic, except, of course, for the mystical sects. But nowadays, with the emergence of new archaeological evidence, even Western scientists are beginning to open their minds and to recognize that the doctrine of reincarnation is implanted in Jewish, Christian and Islamic tradition. And a re-reading of the Bible (both the Old and New Testaments), as well as other Judaic-Christian writings, and of the Koran—non-judgementally and without distortions and misinterpretations based on fear or politics—offers a view of reincarnation that has for centuries been obscured in the West.

So, let's take a journey back through the centuries, exploring the evolution of the doctrine of reincarnation through the scriptures of the Jews, the Christians, and the Moslems.

Judaism

[Moses addressing the Lord concerning the death of human beings:] Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.—Psalm 90:3-4

The Jews continually expected the reincarnation of their prophets. For example, Moses was Abel, son of Adam; and their Messiah was to be the reincarnation of Adam, himself, who had already come a second time as King David.

In his *Antiquity of the Jews*, the Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-100) writes that there were three sects of philosophy among the Jews: the Essenes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. The tenet of the Sadducees was that the soul died along with the death of the body, but Josephus affirms that both the Essenes and Pharisees believed

in rebirth. Describing the Essene philosophy in another book, *Jewish War*, Josephus states: ". . . their doctrine is this, that bodies are corruptible and that the matter they are made of is not permanent, but that the souls are immortal and continue forever: and that they come out of the most subtle air and are united to their bodies as to prisons, into which they are drawn by a certain natural enticement, but that

when they are set free from the bonds of flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward. . . ."

Referring to the Pharisees in the *Antiquity of the Jews*, Josephus tells us that the Pharisees "believe that the souls have an immortal vigor in them [and that the virtuous] shall have the power to revive and live again: on account of which doctrine they are able greatly to persuade the body of the people."

The *Kabala* is said to represent the hidden wisdom behind the Hebrew scriptures, wisdom derived by the rabbis of the Middle Ages from ancient secret doctrines. In the *Zohar*, the classic *Kabalistic* text that is believed to have been composed by Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, A.D. 80, with additions by medieval Hebrew scholars, and in other *Kabalistic* writings, we can find many references to reincarnation. For example, from the *Avodath Hakodesh*: "We have it by tradition that when Moses . . . said in the law, 'O God, the God of the spirits of all the flesh,' (Numbers xvi, 22), he meant to intimate, mystically, that metempsychosis takes place in all flesh, in beasts, reptiles, fowls."

Moving through the centuries, English theologian and statesman Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel stated in the 17th century: "The belief in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls is a firm and infallible dogma accepted by the whole assemblage of our church with one accord, so that there is none to be found

Continued on page 20



I have been

*I have been a wanderer
in strange lands
for many eons,*

*climbed majestic peaks,
one and then another,
with only the shadow
of a hand to grasp;*

*I have seen red-eyed giants
and the smallest creatures
in a magic garden where
rainbows light the path;*

*I have met Medea,
very often,
and danced the dance
of vengeance,*

*meditating sometimes
in the scorching desert,
body aglow
with crimson heat;*

*Bathed in icy azure seas
and dried by puffs of steamy vapor,*

*I have also chanted airy hymns
with woodland sprites
making mischief in the heather;*

*I have laughed with other wanderers
under blazing city skies*

*where tears
have cleansed
the pavements
trod by night women
whose sins*

have cluttered my way, too;

*I have seen a tower crumbling,
its powerful wizard fluttering by,*

*and I have slept peacefully
among the haunted ruins.*

—Rev. Kumari de Sachy

who would dare to deny it. . . We are therefore duty bound to obey and to accept this dogma with acclamation. . . as the truth of it has been incontestably demonstrated by the *Zohar* and all books of the *Kabalists*." Further, the doctrine of transmigration of souls became a universal belief in *Hasidism*, a movement begun in Poland in the 18th century. In modern times, the renowned philosopher, Martin Buber, devoted his life to the dissemination of the teachings and way of life of *Hasidism*.

After only a brief perusal of the history of reincarnation in Jewish theology and tradition, one can see that from ancient to modern times this doctrine has had a place in Jewish theology and tradition. However, for the majority of Jews not familiar with the more mystical sects of Judaism, this belief has no place in their spiritual life. The disappearance of the doctrine of reincarnation from mainstream Judaism may be linked to its unpopularity in Christianity, especially during periods of Jewish persecution and exile.

Christianity

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—*Jesus Christ*

According to Joseph Head and S. L. Cranston, who compiled and edited *Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology*, the belief in reincarnation actually linked the Old and New Testaments through the prophet Elijah, or as the Greeks called him, Elias. The concluding words of the Old Testament (Malachi 4:5) make the following prophecy: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of

Jehovah come." Elijah, or Elias, had already lived among the Jews, and the first book of the New Testament, refers to this prophecy three times. To cite one reference from Mathew 17:9-13:

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist [who had already been beheaded].

With new archeological discoveries we have information about the Gnostics who many scholars believe may have been the descendants of the original Christians and who may have inherited the original teachings of Christ. The Gnostics believed in reincarnation. So did the early Christian fathers. For example, Justin Martyr (100 - 165 CE) openly defended the concepts of reincarnation and metempsychosis, describing in his *Dialogue with Trypho* how the soul inhabits a succession of bodies, but that it could not remember its previous lives. And St. Clement of Alexandria (150 - 220 CE) wrote in his *Exhortations to the Pagans*: We were in being long before the foundation of the world; we existed in the eye of God, for it is our destiny to live in Him. We are the reasonable creatures of the

Divine Word; therefore, we have existed from the beginning, for in the beginning was the Word. . . Not for the first time does He show pity on us in our wanderings. He pitied us from the very beginning. . . .”

Further, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Origen was “the most prominent of all the Church Fathers with the possible exception of Augustine.” St. Jerome considered Origen to be “the greatest teacher of the Church after the apostles.” And St. Gregory of Nyssa described Origen as “the prince of Christian learning in the third century.” With the exception of St. Jerome and St. Augustine, both of whom openly explored the possibility of the pre-existence of the soul, Origen (A.D. 185-254) was the most prominent of all Church fathers. His teachings, scrupulously based on Christian scriptures, also integrated the teachings of Plato, whose philosophy included the doctrine of reincarnation. In *De Principiis*, Origen wrote:

The soul has neither beginning nor end. . . .

Every. . . soul comes into this world strengthened by the victories or weakened by the defeats of its previous life. Its place in this world as a vessel appointed to honor or dishonor is determined by its previous merits or demerits. Its work in this world determines its place in the world which is to follow this. . . .

Given that the early Church fathers spoke favorably about reincarnation, when and why did this doctrine become incompatible with Church dogma? According to many scholars, the answers seem to emerge out of the life and times of the 6th century Byzantine Emperor, Justinian, who declared war against the followers of Origen. Despite—or perhaps because of—Origen’s

high standing in the Church, Justinian called forth a synod in Constantinople, where Origen’s teachings were disparaged; ten years later, Justinian issued anathemas, or curses, against Origen. One of the anathemas cursed the doctrine of pre-existence of the soul, and, thus, the belief in reincarnation vanished from mainstream Christianity. Nevertheless, the belief in reincarnation did not disappear entirely during the Dark Ages, as certain so-called heretical Christian groups continued to embrace the

belief. Most prominent was the Cathari movement in Europe. (The Cathars, who practiced celibacy and vegetarianism, were mercifully wiped out)

Islam

The persecution of scholars by the Christian Church for more than four hundred

years, had eventually driven most students of science and philosophy out of Europe. During the “Dark Ages,” these people found refuge in Arabia, which was then the land of liberty. The Christian Gnostics acquainted the Arabs with Greek philosophy. The Jews instructed them in the *Kabala*. A great teacher and excommunicated bishop, Nestorius, taught them Neoplatonism. In fact, Mohammed, as a boy, came in contact with a Nestorian monastic order and became deeply interested in the religious and philosophical viewpoints of the monks. One would presume, then, that Islamic thinkers should be the heirs apparent to the philosophy of reincarnation, but, somehow, as it had in Judaism and Christianity, this doctrine became obscured in mainstream Islamic tradition and was mainly preserved in the teachings of a mystical sect, in this case, the Persian Sufis. Celebrated poets like Saadi, Hafiz, and Rumi seemed to conceal this knowledge within the symbolism of their poetry and, like the Italian poet

Given that the early Church fathers spoke favorably about reincarnation, when and why did this doctrine become incompatible with Church dogma?

Dante and the French troubadours, used a secret language where certain words—love, the Beloved, woman, rose, stone, nature, life, death—contained one or more hidden meanings alluding to reincarnation. The following example is a poem by Rumi that very obviously celebrates the principle of reincarnation:

I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was Man.
Why should I fear?
When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as Man,
to soar
With angels blest;
but even from angelhood
I must pass on. . .

And, finally, the Koran, itself, states quite clearly that “God generates beings and sends them back over and over again, until they return to Him.”

Dig deeply

The doctrine of reincarnation has been and continues to be accepted and expressed by our greatest intellects: Plato, Pythagoras, Virgil, Giordano Bruno, Dante, Paracelsus, Spinoza, Sir Isaac Newton, John Milton, Shakespeare, John Donne, William Blake, Alexander Pope, William Wordsworth, Samuel Coleridge, Leibnitz, Lessing, Kant, Schiller, Goethe, Mahler, Rilke, Carlyle, Shopenhauer, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Emerson, Thoreau, William James,

Louisa May Alcott, Walt Whitman, Julian Huxley, George Bernard Shaw, William Butler Yeats, Voltaire, Napoleon, Balzac, Victor Hugo, George Sand, Ibsen, Strindberg, Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Edgar Allen Poe, Jack London, William Faulkner, Henry Ford, Carl Jung, Erich Fromm, and Max Planck, Albert Einstein and Dr. Ian Stevenson.* Yet, when we studied these figures in school, how many of our teachers ever pointed out the significance of the doctrine of reincarnation in and to their writings and their lives?

Furthermore, did you ever learn in school that the Toltecs and Aztecs believed in reincarnation and that other Native Americans, including the Eskimos, also understood reincarnation, as well as African tribes and Pacific Islanders. Reincarnation appears in the metaphors included in their writings and in their myths: the phoenix, the butterfly, the wheel of life.

In conclusion, the doctrine of reincarnation is undoubtedly rooted in Western tradition, but, in order to find these roots one must dig deeply through layers of ignorance and fear. Moreover, in our search for Truth, we cannot and should not deny that these roots are intermingled with those in the East. For if one studies the religious, cultural and intellectual histories of the world with an open mind and an open heart, one discovers that our cultures, traditions, and religions are intertwined and that the doctrine of reincarnation is far from alien to Western culture. ■

**Dr. Ian Stevenson, Carlson Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia, has over 1,000 cases in his files of individuals, mostly children, from all over the world, who appear to have memories of past lives. He has found 90% of their memories to be accurate.*

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be. . .and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance of former things.

—Ecclesiastes 1:9-11

Reincarnation in the Bhagavad Gita

4:5: Lord Krishna said: You and I have taken many births, Arjuna. I know them all, but you do not.

6:41 - 43: Whoever embarks on the yogic path—and leaves his body before reaching his highest goal—attains the heavenly states of the virtuous. He stays there a very long time and then takes birth again in this world in a home of the pure and prosperous in order to continue his quest.

Or he is reborn into a family of wise yogis. Such a birth in this world is rare indeed.

In this environment, Arjuna, he soon recalls the knowledge gained in former births and strives for realization even more earnestly than before.

9:24: In truth I am the object of all worship and the one who enjoys sacrifice and ritual. But until the worshipper sees me as I am, he must continually take rebirth.



Yoga and Health

Is sickness and aging necessary?

by Gretchen Avila

Is sickness and aging necessary?" Not according to Deepak Chopra, M.D., the world-renowned endocrinologist and author of *Perfect Health*, *Ageless Body/Timeless Mind*, and *Quantum Healing*. Now in its fifteenth printing, *Perfect Health*, a national bestseller, describes Ayurveda, a system of health care and maintenance that when followed, can, arguably, reverse the aging process and prevent or cure most diseases and illnesses.

Ayurveda is new on the burgeoning frontier of alternative healthcare that combines Western and alternative treatment protocols. Its popularity has also permeated news groups and the Internet's World Wide Web. Holistic in nature—treating mind, body and spirit, Ayurveda incorporates a personally tailored regimen, which is suited to individual needs based on one's body type and comprised of: exercise and/or Yoga postures (stretching), diet, meditation, seasonal routines such as fasting, the use of herbs and herb teas, and other practices that lead to a balanced life.

Ayurveda, rooted in five thousand years of Indian wisdom, was relatively unknown in the United States prior to the first printing of *Perfect Health* in 1991. But now, writes Dr. Chopra in his prologue, Ayurveda is a household name: "Ayurveda, seen in its larger context is nothing less than a technology for contacting the quantum level inside ourselves.

The human body, he explains, is a gateway for what he has coined "the quantum

physical body." This framework of the body can be compared to the guiding theory of physics, which holds that the fabric of nature is comprised of quanta, the smallest unit of matter or energy and which is 10,000,000 to 100,000,000 times smaller than the smallest atom. Before they become matter and energy, thoughts, emotions, proteins, cells, an organs are first invisible vibrations, called quantum fluctuations, on the quantum level.

Additionally, Dr. Chopra discusses how the textbooks of Western medicine previously dictated that a damaged artery would run its course, gradually deteriorating, no matter what the patient did. However, this theory was disproved in 1988, when Dr. Dean Ornish, a San Francisco

cardiologist [and a student of Sri Swami Satchidananda], released the findings of a study of forty patients with advanced heart disease who, through dietary changes and exercise, were able to unblock their arteries. This is one example, Dr. Chopra says, of quantum healing. According to Dr. Chopra, underlying this study is the philosophy that what we can build, we can also unbuild. "A man who dies of a heart attack at age fifty has had innumerable changes to build new arteries. A seventy-year-old woman who develops osteoporosis in her spine has had innumerable changes to make a healthy spine."

This reconstruction is possible because no condition is "fixed" in the human body.

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Dr. Chopra maintains that "at the quantum level, no part of the body lies apart from the rest. There are no wires holding together the molecules of your arteries, just as there are no visible connections binding together stars in the galaxy. Yet arteries and galaxies are both securely held together in a seamless, perfect design. The invisible bonds that you cannot examine under a microscope are quantum in nature."

Through meditation, says Dr. Chopra, "the flow of intelligence bubbling up from the quantum mechanical body can be channeled in countless ways to achieve any result in the physical body, including the cure of serious life threatening diseases and the reversal of the aging process itself." He speaks of how this can be achieved through the focus of one's attention. During meditation, if one focuses on the part of the body that feels pain, the body emits natural healing energy toward that painful area.

Dr. Chopra dedicates a brief chapter in *Perfect Health* to meditation, which he says is most effective when learned from a professional practitioner; it involves sitting quietly in a relaxed position, repeating a *mantra* (a word or phrase).

Another area that Dr. Chopra discusses is the functioning of the three *doshas*: *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*. *Vata* governs the principle of movement; *Pitta* is the process of transformation and metabolism; and *Kapha* is that which is responsible for growth, adding structure unit by unit.

Doshas can be compared to DNA. In the same way that everyone's genetic makeup is determined by DNA, so, too, is everyone born with a permanent *dosha* makeup or blueprint. Although all three *doshas* are present in everyone to some degree, each individual has a dominant *dosha* or combination of *doshas*. After determining one's predominant *dosha*, either by taking the type of written test that

appears in *Perfect Health*, which is comprised of numerous personal questions, or by consulting an Ayurvedic physician, one can begin to follow a system of diet, exercise, and daily and seasonal routines in order to work on cultivating health.

Once an individual's *dosha* makeup is determined, the aim of Ayurveda is to keep the *doshas* balanced. "In Ayurveda we rely on the basic principle that any disorder can be prevented as long as balance is maintained, not just in the body, but in the mind and spirit as well," explains Dr. Chopra. When in perfect balance, the body is free from aches and pains.

To this end, Dr. Chopra would encourage a *Vata* dominant person to eat warm food with added butter and fat, as well as salty and sweet tasting foods, to avoid bitter foods, and to engage in light physical exercise. He would advise the *Pitta* dominant person to consume sweet and bitter

foods, to avoid anything salty or sour, and to exercise moderately. And he would recommend that the *Kapha* individual partake of bitter and astringent

foods, avoid sweet foods completely, and exercise rigorously.

In addition to the physical aspects of one's makeup, some psychological factors are also taken into account in determining one's dominant *dosha*. For example: how quickly one learns, how quickly one becomes tired, and how one reacts to stress. Similarly, there are also biological traits that are taken into account: how easily one digests food, how quickly one metabolizes food, how thin or heavy one is by nature, and what types of food one craves.

The *doshas* are further used as a system to classify one's "psycho-physiological" nature. That is, someone who learns quickly but also forgets quickly, performs activities quickly, angers easily, and is thin by nature would generally be considered a

When in perfect balance, the body is free from aches and pains.

Vata type. Someone who is intellectual, driven to succeed, has a medium build, and is very intense would be considered a *Pitta* type. And someone who performs activities slowly, who is easy going, naturally plump, and learns slowly (although has an excellent long-term memory) would be considered a *Kapha* type.

Dr. Chopra compares the *doshas*, which are unlike anything that we recognize in our Western framework, to the millions of dots that constitute the picture on a television screen all harmoniously fluctuating to produce the colors and images that we see. And, further, he compares bringing the *doshas* into balance to the act of adjusting the colors on the screen. He also includes a discussion of the telltale signs indicating that a *dosha* is imbalanced, signs that vary according to one's body type. Any physical discomforts, for example, aches and pains, as well as such psychological discomforts as depression and confusion are not causes for panic, but, rather, they are signals from the body that the *doshas* need attention.

More specifically, any signs of excessive anxiety or restlessness generally signal that a *Vata* imbalance is present. By contrast, someone who is a *Kapha* type could very easily throw their *Kapha dosha* out of balance if that person eats foods or participates in exercise that is not complementary to his or her dominant *dosha*.

In addition to dietary changes, exercise, and meditation, other Ayurvedic treatments presented in the book include aromatherapy,

primordial sound, body massages, and a process called *Panchakarma*.

Panchakarma, or purification, is a five-step detoxifying process administered on a seasonal basis by an Ayurvedic physician. The patient is given a laxative to flush out the intestines, a full-body oil massage, a sweat treatment with herbalized steam, an enema, which is an injection of medicated liquid into the intestinal tract by way of the anus, and a nasal administration in which medicinal oils are inhaled to clear the patient's nasal passage.

In conclusion, the demand for information on Ayurveda has also spilled over into cyberspace. The Ayurvedic Foundation Web Page contains a diverse menu of topics, like "Learn to Make any Dish Healthier" and "Get your Recipes Published on the Web," and it also offers information about Ayurvedic training and workshop schedules. Dr. Christopher Jordan, a chiropractic physician in DeLand, Florida, on his web page, summarizes in a nutshell the Ayurvedic process. "Ayurveda gives us a model to look at each individual as a unique makeup of the three *doshas* and hereby to design treatment protocols that specifically address a person's health challenges.

Alternative medicine in combination with Western medicine is the wave of the future, according to numerous magazine and newspaper articles. In fact, a recent article in *Natural Health* magazine stated that as many as 50% of cancer patients are believed to seek out alternative protocols on their own, usually without telling their doctors. ■

Say, Lord, to me. . .did my infancy succeed another age of mine that died before it? Was it that which I spent within my mother's womb? . . .and what before that life again, O God my joy, was I anywhere or in any body? For this I have none to tell me, neither father nor mother, not experience of others, nor mine own memory.

—St. Augustine (The Confessions of St. Augustine)

Vidyalayam Corner

The Vidyalayam (Temple of Learning) had a very busy year.

In addition to their academic studies, Vidyalayam students are encouraged to participate in intercultural activities. For example, Vidyalayam students and teachers, Mrs. Raji and Swami Dayananda Ma, became involved in a cultural diversity group sponsored by the Virginia public schools, which meant that the Vidyalayam students and faculty visited and hosted many students and teachers from other schools. During these visits, the focus was on the richness of the world's diverse cultures. Several Virginia public schools came to visit the Vidyalayam, and participants were taken on a tour of LOTUS and Yogaville. Hosted by their Yogaville counterparts, the children learned about the yogic lifestyle and teachings of Sri Gurudev. Vidyalayam students, in their turn, performed songs in English, Spanish, Tamil and Sanskrit at the various schools that they visited.

During the year, the students presented a lovely exhibition of their artwork, and community members were invited to visit the

exhibit. And at the end of their school year, they performed their inspiring songs not only during several Saturday evening satsangs at Yogaville, but also during the Vision of Peace program that was held at the University of Virginia on the weekend of June 29 - 30 in celebration of the anniversary of Sri Gurudev's thirty years of service in the West and the tenth anniversary of LOTUS.

And speaking about inspiring songs, the Vidyalayam students also produced their first album, *Voices of the Vidyalayam*, which is available at the Yogaville bookstore in Sivananda hall. Our gratitude goes to Meera Alexander, Rich Friedel, Swami Gurucharanananda, and Mrs. Raji for their guidance and assistance in producing this exceptional tape.

Also, two outstanding Vidyalayam students, Asha Goodman and Sita Schoonover, graduated this year. We wish them all success in their new school.

To end this column, we include the following short essay—and some artwork—composed by seven-year-old Vidyalayam student, Vani Li MacIsaac. ■

Spring Semester

I enjoyed the spring semester, especially the thought of finishing my books. I had a very nice time, and it was lots of fun.

I loved my teacher. I hope to have a good semester in September when school re-opens and to enjoy all the kids. I like to clean Kailash. And it's fun to read new books.



Integral Yoga Highlights

Teens who live at Yogaville say they're not so different

by Will McLendon

*Will McLendon is a junior at Fuqua School. He is the Youth Correspondent of the **Richmond Times-Dispatch**, the Virginia newspaper from which the following article, published on May 31, 1996, has been reprinted.*

Imagine spending your teenage years living with lots of other families, immersed in the study of the world's cultures and religions. For two Virginia teenagers, this idea isn't a figment of the imagination. It's a way of life.

Yogaville, a thousand-acre ecumenical community that borders the James River in Buckingham County, is composed of a diverse population representing countries around the globe. At least thirteen languages are spoken among the 250 residents. Every year, hundreds of thousands of people trek there to find peace or to marvel at the environment.

Each resident, no matter what age or gender, is searching for spiritual harmony. The techniques of Yoga, based primarily on breathing and stretching the body, are used to help create peace of mind and enlightenment.

Swami Satchidananda, a Hindu monk who founded the ashram in 1979, teaches his followers to know and to respect the world's religions. He says that this is the path to God.

Ahalya Emenogu and Bharati Shapero say that growing up in Yogaville has taught them many things.

"You get to meet so many people from all over the world and also to learn about different cultures and their ways of life,"

says Ahalaya, 17, a resident of Yogaville for nine years.

"However," Bharati, 16, added, "that fills up only part of your life."

Ahalya, whose given Sanskrit name means "Beauty Personified," moved to Yogaville from Nigeria. Her father had known of the community and wanted his daughter to grow up there. Because of Nigeria's curb on emigration, her father is rarely allowed to leave the country. Ahalya last saw him in 1991 but has kept in touch with him through letters and the occasional telephone call. Growing up, Ahalya has lived with families in the Yogaville community

changing homes about once a year. Recently, she was allowed to live by herself in a dorm

"We're all normal people."

She has more freedom now, she says, but she still has to do chores such as vacuuming and cleaning the bathrooms.

Bharati, or "Wisdom and Learning," was born into the community and lives with her family in a private home nearby. Her father has been a part of Yogaville since he was 18 years old.

Yogaville's school, the Vidyalayam, teaches children only through sixth grade, so both girls now attend Fuqua School in Farmville, Virginia, where they are at the top of their class.

Like other teenagers, Ahalya and Bharati find solace in things other than their day-to-day life. On weekends, they enjoy visiting Charlottesville. Since neither has a car, transportation is provided for them. They spend time with friends who visit them

or swim and hike the acres of forests and fields at Yogaville.

Life in Yogaville does have its restrictions. Besides the expected rules—teenage celibacy, no drinking, no smoking, and no drugs—each member must be a vegetarian. Dating is not allowed until teens have graduated from high school unless parents allow an exception. Despite community rules, the girls say that parents call the shots.

The girls say that they have had to deal with misperceptions about Yogaville and the occasional rumor.

"If they tell rumors about us, then they

should come to [Yogaville] to see what it really is," Ahalya says. "We're all normal people."

Bharati admits that her dedication to things held dear in youth has been tested by being a teen.

"When I was younger, I did everything associated with Yoga and religion. Now my attention span is less," she said. "Most teenagers aren't focused on religion, and this is the same with me. But when I'm older, I'll get back into it."

Both girls are uncertain about what lies ahead. They want to go to college and are considering majoring in art. ■



From left to right: Bharati Shapero and
Ahalya Njideka Avesta Emenogu

*May that one Para Brahman
of the Hindus,
Allah of the Mohammedans,
Buddha of the Buddhists,
Ahur Mazda of the Zoroastrians,
Jehovah of the Jews,
Father in the Heaven
of the Christians,
The Divine Mother
of the Shaktas,
Grant unto us all,
Peace, Wisdom, Prosperity,
and Immortality.*

—Sri Swami Sivananda



It is a wonder

*A fish goes thirsty
Though abiding in water!*

*A wave wanders restlessly
For fullness and perfection
Though it is always
Enfolded by the Ocean!*

*A person wanders in his dreams
Though lying comfortably on his bed!
The soul wanders through
The cycles of birth and death
Though it is always the Self
In the three periods of time!*

*It is a wonder of wonders
That the Self that shines brighter
Than a million of blazing suns
Is veiled by Ignorance!!*

—Swami Jyotirmayananda,

International Yoga Guide, vol. xxxi; No. 7

*Wherever you go,
you carry your own imagination.
—Sri Gurudev*

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particular situation—heaven or hell!
—Sri Gurudev*

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is to be experienced by this body,
then we don't need the body.
—Sri Gurudev*

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You will get a new body.
—Sri Gurudev*

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*The past is veiled to you until such time
as it is good ad helpful to remember it.
—Sri Swami Sivananda*

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—Sri Gurudev*

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*The world, itself, is eternal.
—Sri Gurudev*

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